



Spreadsheets

Spreadsheets are the same as “tables”, “tabulations” and “schedules”. They are arrangements in rows and columns. This way of arranging data (on paper) has been used for hundreds of years.

Such tables are everywhere around us. Common examples are calendars and year-planners; bus and train timetables; team lists; examination results; television schedules; collection sheets; wage slips; price lists; restaurant menus; parts lists, cutting lists and bills of quantities.

Understanding of spreadsheets is for practical purposes “intuitive”. These arrangements are so familiar as to appear “natural” and “obvious”, and this is part of their intention, and their value.

Spreadsheets can concentrate a lot of data on a single page. They can be used to sort (i.e. to “analyse”) data and to summarise it down to totals and to a single grand total. They tend to create some sort of “mind map”, in the sense of presenting both the parts and the whole, in one go.

This item is intended to introduce and to objectify the broad idea of spreadsheets. The next stage will be for more comrades to begin to use this form of working.

Some simple rules will make your spreadsheets better. Try to keep them on one page, both horizontally and vertically. Use as few columns as possible. Use the biggest font possible. If you use colours, use very pale ones.

This item completes our fifth part on office processes. There could be much more to say about these and other ones, including more about computer software. But the main point here is that numbers of us, if not all of us, must learn, and must continue to learn how to do such basic operations. The common aim should be to build up an internal collective bank of expertise, so that when required, action proceeds efficiently and smoothly.

Office processes have been perfected under the bourgeois dictatorship, mainly as instruments of power over the working class and other classes. To overthrow the bourgeois ruling class, the partisans of our own class – the proletariat – will have to master these common processes.

- The above is to introduce an original reading-text: [Spreadsheets, Tweedie, 2013.](#)
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